

The following claims are presented for examination:

- 1. (currently amended)** A method comprising:

 - receiving a first plurality of protocol data units at a first input, wherein all of said first plurality of protocol data units are *en route* to a first congestible **[device] node** ;
 - maintaining at a protocol-data-unit excisor a first queue for said first plurality of protocol data units;
 - receiving at said protocol-data-unit excisor a flow control signal that indicates whether said first congestible **[device] node** is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said first queue; and
 - selectively dropping, at said protocol-data-unit excisor, one or more of said protocol data units based on a first metric of said first queue.
 - 2. (previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein said protocol-data-unit excisor decides whether to drop a protocol data unit based on Random Early Detection.
 - 3. (previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein said indication is conveyed using back-pressure flow control.
 - 4. (previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein said indication is conveyed using the Pause frame procedure of IEEE 802.3.
 - 5. (currently amended)** The method of claim 1 further comprising:

 - receiving a second plurality of protocol data units at a second input, wherein all of said second plurality of protocol data units are *en route* to a second congestible **[device] node**;
 - maintaining at said protocol-data-unit excisor a second queue for said for said second plurality of protocol data units;
 - receiving at said protocol-data-unit excisor a flow control signal that indicates whether said second congestible **[device] node** is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said second queue; and
 - selectively dropping, at said protocol-data-unit excisor, one or more of said protocol data units based on a second metric of said second queue.
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6. (currently amended) A protocol-data-unit excisor comprising:
a first input for receiving a first plurality of protocol data units, wherein all of said first plurality of protocol data units are *en route* to a first congestible **[device] node**;
a first queue for storing said first plurality of protocol data units;
a first receiver for receiving a flow control signal that indicates whether said first congestible **[device] node** is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said first queue; and
a processor for selectively dropping one or more of said protocol data units based on a metric of said first queue.

7. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said indication is conveyed using back-pressure flow control.

8. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said indication is conveyed using the Pause frame procedure of IEEE 802.3.

9. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said protocol-data-unit excisor decides whether to drop a protocol data unit based on Random Early Detection.

10. (currently amended) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 further comprising:
a second input for receiving a second plurality of protocol data units, wherein all of said second plurality of protocol data units are en route to a second congestible **[device] node**;
a second queue for storing said second plurality of protocol data units; and
a second receiver for receiving a flow control signal that indicates whether said second congestible **[device] node** is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said second queue;
wherein said processor is also for selectively dropping one or more of said protocol data units based on a metric of said second queue.